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A cordwainer's wife in high politics: a microhistory of Mrs Caute*

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces a hitherto unstudied pair of seventeenth-century texts, by the cordwainer's wife Sarah Caute, which exercised political influence at the highest levels. Caute relates how in 1683–4, whilst in London, she experienced a sudden desire for herself and her six-year-old son Mathew to be baptised by Thomas Ken (1637–1711), who was then the prebend of Winchester (he would soon, in January 1685, be consecrated Bishop of Bath and Wells). Since he was a year old, Caute narrates, Mathew did not speak or walk and suffered 'violent fitt[s]' which 'took him of his leges and his teeth fell out of his head at the roots. . .till they were all out'. Caute's story reached the ears of Charles II and James II; thereby, she participated personally and in absentia in elite negotiations of confessional identity. Caute's texts challenge the notion that non-elite women's writing is scarce and of limited political interest.

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This article introduces a hitherto unstudied pair of seventeenth-century texts, by the cordwainer's wife Sarah Caute, which exercised political influence at the highest levels. My first goal in this article is to present a microhistory of Caute, and to indicate how her texts challenge what we might currently know about non-elite women's political work. Caute relates how in 1683–4, whilst in London, she experienced a sudden desire for herself and her six-year-old son Mathew to be baptised by Thomas Ken (1637–1711), who was then the prebend of Winchester (he would soon, in January 1685, be consecrated Bishop of Bath and Wells). Since he was a year old, Caute narrates, Mathew did not speak or walk and suffered 'violent fitt[s]' which 'took him of his leges and his teeth fell out of his head at the roots . . . till they were all out'.[1] After several adventures, Caute finally met Ken, who baptised them. As a result, Caute states, Mathew was cured of at least some of his symptoms, proving this by

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[1]MS Rawl D 843, 53 r.

speaking for the first time – with a resounding endorsement of Ken: 'my name . . . is Mathew Dr Ken Baptized me' – before heading to church to answer the catechism.[2] Caute's story reached the ears of Charles II and James II; thereby, she participated personally and in absentia in elite negotiations of confessional identity. Susan Wiseman proposes analysing early modern non-elite women in terms of networks as 'once we introduce the idea of the "network" it can encompass several forms of contact: writing by women only, writing about women or on their behalf, reported speech, and non-verbal communication'.[3] I explore Caute's texts in the context of her Winchester milieu and the oral and textual networks she belonged to and influenced, which included all the elements Wiseman lists. Elizabeth Horodovich reminds us that this was 'a culture that thought deeply about talk' and its ability to build society and break it down.[4] Horodovich explains,

> Women's voices were usually precluded from public politics, and early modern authorities assumed that commoners had no place discussing the affairs of the state or the kingdom. However, a close look at even the most intimate verbal exchanges shows that informal or private talk among even humble subjects could prove significant in greater political processes.[5]

Caute 'prove[d] significant in greater political processes' not by directly 'discussing the affairs of the state or the kingdom' but as, in Adam Fox's terms, a 'custodian[] of family history' who actively involved elites in her family's story.[6] Jane Shaw writes that early modern 'lived religion would always affect the ideas of intellectuals'; Caute's two texts are generative examples of this.[7]

This article has a second purpose as well. Having reconstructed Caute's story, I will conclude by modelling how a modern theoretical framework can help us make better sense of its historical significance, by reading Mathew's transformation through the specific lens of disability studies. Though Caute does not use the word 'disabled', Mathew can be understood as such in early modern terms as a person whose bodily impairments limit his ability to fulfil his role as a full member of Christian society.[8] Accordingly, I will end this essay by exploring how the Cautes' experiences of sickness and disability shape the ways in which their narrative is framed and re-framed.

Caute's two texts reside in the Bodleian Library in Oxford UK (MS Rawl D 843) and the British Library in London UK (MS Harl 7034). As the former has not been printed

[2]MS Rawl D 843, 53 r. If Mathew seems to be ventriloquising Ken, we might read Caute's account alongside the scripts Ken wrote for two girls, Frances and Mary (whom he calls 'my deare chickens'), which likewise put Ken-endorsed words into the mouths of children. The scripts include a dialogue about how children should be good, and a dialogue about what they should teach their brother to say when he learns to speak, concluding 'Weele teach him well by heart to get| Glory to God, and soone hele try| Blessing to aske like you and I', *Bp Kenns Poems*, 7, 5.

[3]Wiseman, Non-elite Women', 568. Several scholars of early modern women's writing emphasise the need to consider women on their own terms, outside of the male-centred notion of a single authorial voice, e.g. Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing*, 3, 51. As Margaret Ferguson reminds us, modern 'liberal feminist' ideas of autonomy as freedom do not map cleanly onto early modern women's ideas of their 'selfhood', 'Moderation and its Discontents', 354–5.

[4]Horodovich, 'Speech and Oral Culture', 302. On various theories of networks useful for analysing early modern non-elite women, spatially, diachronically, and socially, see Wiseman, 'Non-elite women'.

[5]Horodovich, 'Speech and Oral Culture', 312.

[6]Tracing the general devaluing of women's words in early modern culture (for instance dismissing them as 'old wives tales') Fox explains that women's voices were listened to insofar as 'women's stories also reflected the fact that they were frequently the custodians of family history', with women associated with fireside tales, ballads, riddles, and 'nursery lore', *Oral and Literate Culture*, 173–212.

[7]Shaw, *Miracles*, 181. Shaw writes (ibid.) of how popular belief in miracles impacted the ways in which miracles were debated well into the eighteenth century, 'individuals and groups still sought and believed they received evidence of God's existence, God's activity in the world, and God's love for them in the working of miracles. As long as that occurred the debate could not be closed'.

[8]For disability as an operational category in the early modern era, see Love, *Early Modern Theatre*, 8; Turner, *Disability*, 2, 9.

before, I reproduce it in full. It is transcribed in an anonymous hand from a lost document written by Caute, one of several 'miscellaneous theological papers bound up together in about the year 1682', collected by the Bishop and scholar Richard Rawlinson (1690–1755) and containing discussions of anabaptism and Roman Catholicism and two other documents by women[9]

> To all serious Christians whom this may concerne – these are to give an account how a perticular person (which had many years lived out of the communion of Christian society) was by the inward work of the Almighty converted to become a baptized Christian.
>
> The manner how this good worke was brought to pass you may take your observations from the following account. the woman with many thoughts musinge was under an instant surprise, so inwardly wroate on that noe satisfaction could be obteined but that she must with hir child take a journey from London to Winton to be both Baptized by the R^{d} Dr Ken whom she never before knew, the thoughts so powerfully continued and soe wroat on hir, that a fitt of sickness followed, under which and in the time in continued, she declared her mind to her husband, who when his wife had informed him, he asked her what knoledge she had of the before nam'd doctor, she answer'd she never had seen his face, where upon her Husband said as God had put it into her mind he would never hinder it and as soon as she was gott well, he took a jorney on foot 5 weeks before Christmas in extream snowy-weather, in many places up to the calves of his legs in snow to find the Reverend Dr Ken but when her husband came to Winchester the Dr was at Tangere her husband being desirous that such a good work might be effected, sent her word that the Dr was at Winchester, advising her to make for Winton the next returne of the Waggon, the which was accordingly perform'd expecting to see the Dr, who was absent at that time, her husbands advise was that it might be done by some other Divine the woman replyed it must be done by him or none, She continuing her resolution watched pasionatly the Dr Returne, which was near a fortnight before Easter, when her husband observed it he advised her to take the oportunity with all convenient speed to have so good a thing perform'd where upon she replyed the king will will be here in a quartar of a years time and then she would accept of the performance taking time to prevent the story of people, but her husband was so instant to have this good work done that he prevailed and agreed there, unto where upon they went to the Dr $^{\wedge who}$ with sacred consideration advised her to take farther advertisement and withall instructed her with great patience on his part to make her fitting to take that sacrament which was performed according to the canons of the Church of England, and soe she became a communicant at the said church. near a fortnight after King Charles sent for her asking by what advise she choose him rather than any other. she replyed my Leidge had it not been done by him I should not have accepted it of any other, and to the further satisfaction of the reader I do here by solemnly atest that to the best of my remembrance I never was in any sectirean or Dissenting meeting house from my cradle to this imediate instant./
>
> Between 4 and five and twenty years I was convinced.
>
> In answer to yr desire, M Boy was a lust child born and had his health very well and had all his teeth at a yeare old, and could goe at the same age but about that age he was taken with fitts both inwardly and outwardly which were so violent that they took him of his leges and his teeth fell out of his head at the roots, every fitt forcing out one or two till they were all out. The Friday before he was baptized, the Sunday following he had so violent a fitt that the spectators thought that he could never escape it, the of which fitt forced out the two last and none were left and he craled on his Breech five years, which made it so hard as a travilling

[9]Macray, *Catalogi*, 602. Amid these papers, Jane Nugent signs a 1699 document written in another hand attesting her repentance at turning to Roman Catholicism, and an Ann Edge confirms in her 1694 'Covenant' and 'prayer in a time of affliction', both seemingly written and signed by herself, that she turns to God, MS Rawl D 843, 50 r, 130 r-131 v.:

man's foot, a week and odd days after He was Baptised sitting in his chair at the door one of his play mates being a little girl called him Tattee, the child which never space before said my name is not Tattee, it is Mathew Dr Ken Baptized me, about a fortnight after his Baptisme he stated out his chair and went amongst his play mates with out holding or being bidden and that very day month following he went in my hand into the church where he was Baptized which is near a quarter of a mile and answered to many Questions of the Chatichisme. sine his Baptisme he hath continued well in speaking and going, he hath 14 teeth at the breeding of the 2 first he had a violent feavour but no signe of a fitt/

~~This was written out~~

This was a copy of the Woman's Relations which she wrote her own self, who as she was never in any sectirean Meeting House so she was never in any church before.[10]

The second text, in the British Library, is entirely in the hand of the Cambridge antiquary Thomas Baker (1656–1750). It was printed in John Anderdon's 1851 biography of Ken, which I discuss below; but as it is much shorter than the Bodleian version I likewise reproduce it in full. The British Library version of Caute's account focuses only on Mathew's baptism. In so doing, it positions Caute largely as a humble mother relating her son's story in a tone of abject gratitude to their elite benefactor. The British Library version abstracts Caute from the familial, religious, and political contexts in the Bodleian text: her husband's epic journey through the snow, her gut feeling that she must meet Ken, her own sickness, Ken's time in Tangier, and her meeting with the King. In Baker's hands, the tale is simply the curious case of Mathew Caute (or, in Baker's mistranscription, Cante), a disabled boy 'cured' by baptism:

The Copy of an account given by Sarah Cante, how her Son was wonderfully cured of Fitts &c: by being baptiz'd by D^{r} Kenn.

In answere to your desire, my Boy, of whome you enquire, was a lusty child born, & had his health very well, & all his teeth, & could go by the time he was a year old. near to the same age, he was taken with Fitts both inward & outward, w[hi]^{ch} were so violent, that he lost the use of his Legs, & likewise they caused all his teeth to fall out of his Head by the roots. He crawled on his Breech five years, by the ill consequence of those fits, w[hi]^{ch} made his skin as hard, as a travelling man's foot. The Friday before he was baptiz'd (the Sunday following) he had so violent a fitt, that the Spectators very much doubted of his recovery. The force of that fit turned out his two last teeth by the roots, so that he had then none left. About a week and odd days, after he was baptiz'd, sitting at the Door in his Chair, one of his Play-mates, a little Girle called him Tattee; the Child (w[hi]^{ch} never spake before) answered, my name is not Tattee, my name is Mathew, D^{r} Kenn has baptiz'd me. About a fortnight after, sitting at the Door in a Chair, he started up and went among his Play-fellows without being bid, & without leading: & that very day month following his Baptism, he went in my hand to the Church, in w[hi]^{ch} he was baptised (w[hi]^{ch} is near a quarter of a mile from my then dwelling) & answered several questions of the Church Catechism. Since his baptism he hath continued well, both in speaking & going, & has 14: teeth. The breeding of the two first put him into a violent Feaver, by means of the Hardness of his Gums, but no sign of any fit, as a Relick of the aforementioned; & is as fine a Lad in my eyes, as one in an hundred.

This is an account from her, who holds her self unworthy of so great a favour.
Sarah Cante.

This I had from the Master Dr Jenkin, who was much with Bp: Kenn, in Lord Weymouth's Family.[11]

[10]MS Rawl D 843, 52 r-53 v.
[11]MS Harl 7034, p. 444. Many thanks to Michael Powell-Davies for photographing this for me.

This shorter account is framed with modesty topoi: Caute claims she wrote only because invited to do so by Ken and signs off by emphasising that she is unworthy of engaging with him. This signoff is common for a social inferior of any gender writing to a social superior in the seventeenth century. The signoff is absent from the Bodleian manuscript; Baker could have added it himself, or alternatively Caute's lost original account could have taken the form of a letter to Ken and the transcriber of the Bodleian version removed her signoff.[12] Susan Whyman suggests that as women's literacy and letter-writing levels increased this kind of generic signoff was increasingly a stylistic convention, becoming less heartfelt as the eighteenth century approached and wore on.[13] Caute may have invented an inquiry from Ken as a gateway to putting her account into writing; Patricia Pender describes these kinds of modesty tropes as part of early modern women's 'subtle and strategic self-fashioning'.[14] The preservation and circulation of a transcription of a woman's text instead of the original text authored by the woman herself occurs in several other seventeenth-century cases, for example that of Mary Simpson whose work was paraphrased and edited by the minister John Collinges. Asserting a joint claim to the text with Simpson, Collinges notes he has seen but decided not to publish several leaves of Simpson's, precisely because he has already added so much writing of his own to the text.[15]

Caute reappears once more, in service of the laudatory depiction of Ken in *The Life of Thomas Ken* by John Lavicount Anderdon (1792–1874), before disappearing from view. For Anderdon, Caute is an example of Ken's work with 'the poor of St John's' in Winchester and against 'the contentious spirit of the Anabaptists'.[16] Transcribing MS Harl, (which he cites as Harl MS vol 7 fol. 446), Anderdon positions Caute as a trustworthy vessel of the narrative because she is Mathew's mother – 'the particulars cannot be better told than by his own mother' – though uses her only to bolster Ken's authority.[17] Anderdon caps the transcription with an insistence on the trustworthiness of the text which relies on him relocating Ken as the origin of 'the paper' telling Caute's story, and the chain of elite male readers of the story following on from this: 'The antiquary, Thomas Baker, who records it, Dr. Jenkins, who gave him the paper, and Ken, from whom this last received it – all men of good sound sense – believed the fact, and told the truth'.[18] Anderdon sharply abrogates Caute's ability to offer a personal narrative that competes with, or adds detail and backstory to, the neat description of saintly Ken miraculously curing a poor disabled boy. Instead, Anderdon suggests we consider the universal reactions of all parents whose children are miraculously cured: it

[12]There are several signs the text in the Bodleian was copied from an earlier text, the latter written by Caute herself. The line 'this was written out' is crossed out and replaced with 'this is a copy', suggesting that in the original text Caute stated that she wrote out her own account and the transcriber copied this out before belatedly realising that they had to change it in order for their document to make sense. This could indicate that the copy was created in haste, with the primary aim of conveying information about Caute taking precedence over a perfect-looking transcription. The repeated 'will' in 'the king will will be here in a quartar of a years time' occurs as the copier turns from fol 52 r to fol 53 v, a common effect of transcribers forgetting what they had just copied out before they turned the page.
[13]Whyman, *The Pen and the People*, 19–45.
[14]Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing*, 3.
[15]Collinges, *Faith and Experience*, A6r-A7v.
[16]Anderdon, *Life of Ken*, vol 1, G6v-7 r. Anderdon wrote several works regarding Ken; in 1852 he reprinted Ken's *Exposition of the Apostle's Creed* and published *Approach to the Holy Altar*: a selection from Ken's devotional works.
[17]Anderdon, *Life of Ken*, vol 1, H1r-v. Anderdon's transcription of MS Harl 7034 is overall accurate, with small differences of punctuation and capitalisation.
[18]Anderdon, *Life of Ken*, vol 1, H1v.

cannot fail to bring them closer to God, 'Any parent who has had a beloved child snatched, as it were, from the arms of death, and restored to health against all reasonable hope, will not fear to bless God, Whose divine interposition has wrought a miracle of mercy'.[19] This contrasts starkly with Caute's presentation in the Bodleian text, wherein she talks not about wanting to be closer to God but about wanting to encounter Ken, meeting Charles II, her illness, Mathew's distressing fits, and entering into church community.

The likely ordering of the chain of texts involved in Caute's story from 1684 to 1851 tells a story of the increasing circumscription of her voice. Caute's original lost text was transcribed into the Bodleian version. Either the original text or the Bodleian manuscript formed the basis of Baker's redux edition in the British Library which limits Caute's role to that of a mother telling her and her son's story.[20] Transcribing and reframing Baker's text, Anderdon limits Caute's role further to that of a mother telling a story that is Ken's. Bringing Caute back into her social and spatial contexts enables us to appreciate her world more fully. Leah Orr and Margaret Ferguson encourage us to examine early modern women writers beyond the more usually studied literary authors and topic of gender.[21] Though Caute seems to have been literate, her texts challenge us to see literacy in a different way. Frances Dolan challenges the belief that literacy is equivalent to women's subjectivity, 'that women's literacy inevitably facilitated their self-expression and self-determination' and was 'a reliable avenue to self-assertion'.[22] The texts present Caute and Mathew as stock subjects in one of the common seventeenth-century narratives around disability – that of overcoming disability with divine aid. However, these subjects emerge from a richer context. Caute's writing is part of a network of several texts, most of them altered through transcription and used for a variety of politico-religious and personal agendas, fully understandable only as part of an oral culture. In considering Caute's texts in their social, local, and material contexts, we might find useful J. Logan Smilges' notion of 'rhetorical energy': 'the signifying aura that surrounds marginalised people' whereby rhetoric involves an 'assemblage' of embodied, material, and 'as yet unimagined' ways of signifying alongside or instead of spoken and written words.[23] Caute's London-Winchester connections, personal politico-religious history, relationship with her son, and Mathew's friendship with his playmates, all predate and inform her eruption into writing.

A Winchester Denizen. A Winchester Fraud? Who was Sarah Caute?

Sarah and her husband Richard Caute, a cordwainer (shoemaker/leatherworker, a relatively sizable Winchester industry), married in Winchester St Maurice in 1669;

[19] Anderdon, *Life of Ken*, vol 1, H3v.

[20] I conjecture that Baker's text is a copy either of Caute's account in MS Rawl D 843 or of a lost original text that lies behind both MS Harl 7034 and MS Rawl D 843, because though Baker's transcription is very close in detail to the relevant section in the Rawlinson MS, Baker mistranscribes Caute's name as 'Cante'. The more obvious reading, fitting the more usual spelling of the name in Hampshire, is 'Caute'. Baker potentially misread the handwritten label on MS Rawl D 843, where the 'u' in 'Mrs Caute' can conceivably be read as 'n'. Thus, Baker was probably working from a written rather than oral source (otherwise he would have heard Sarah's surname as a homonym of 'caught').

[21] Orr, *Publishing the Woman Writer*, 15.

[22] Dolan, 'Reading, Writing, and Other Crimes',160.

[23] Smilges, *Queer Silence*, 46, 43.

the couple had both London and Winchester connections.[24] Caute (also spelt Cawte and Caught, sometimes spelt or mistranscribed 'Cante') is a Hampshire name probably deriving from Cawet; the Caute family remained concentrated in this region into the twenty-first century. Caute's life is not well-documented after her baptism, though she may have remarried before her death. Mathew seems to have stayed in Winchester and had several children.[25] Sarah's father the glover Humphrey Bishopp of Hampshire remembers her in his 1666 will, making his wife Mary his executrix. Humphrey's wobbling signature in this will may indicate that he was unaccustomed to reading and writing, though he handled and deployed an important legal document and (as Adrienne Rosen discusses) his will shows he was not extremely poor as he had around £88 plus two leases over and above the £9. 12s. 6d. and buttery, chamber, and shop at the Phoenix he declares in his inventory; moreover in the hearth tax he was taxed at two hearths.[26] In his will, Humphrey gives to his sons Humphrey and William Bishopp 'my house called the phenix after the Decease of my Executrix', then continues 'I give to my daughter Sarah the house & Lease of the Citty Land without the Roomes of the free Land that belong to the phenix after the Decease of my Executrix'.[27] Though there is no trace of the Phoenix now, the Hampshire Record Office catalogue suggests that it was in Southgate Street, around 10 minutes' walk from Colebrook Street where Sarah Caute stayed in the 1680s.[28] Humphrey Bishopp and Richard Caute likely had business connections with Winchester's tanning trades and possibly with each other; both worked in leather to make objects for the hands and feet, respectively.

Though her husband lies to her saying that Ken is in Winchester, when Caute discovers that he is in Tangier (where he was chaplain to the English fleet) she insists on waiting for him to return to perform the baptisms, spending several months in Winchester. Written on the verso of the second page of MS Rawl D 843 is 'Mrs Caute in Colebrook-Street, Winton' (Winton being an old name for Winchester). This note may be in the same hand as the account, though some letter forms (notably the majuscule W) differ between the two. On Colebrook Street, Caute's milieu, like her own family, involved a number of tradespeople. Throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth

[24]In 1675 a Richard Caute 'S. of Richard Caute Cordwayn and of Sarah' was baptised in St Giles Cripplegate. The 1665 Hampshire hearth tax assessment identifies Richard Cawtes in Woodcott, East Hook, Chark, and (perhaps most likely to be Sarah's husband) Winchester, Hughes and White, *Hampshire Hearth Tax*, 20, 44, 137. A few archival references may be to Sarah's husband. A Richard Caughtt is mentioned in a 1692 lease of a property in Wood Street. A Richard Cawte's 1699 will mentions a 'sister Sarah Caught' (potentially the sister-in-law and namesake of the Sarah Caute I am interested in) and her daughter Amy. Though clothworking was most key to Winchester, leathermaking, tanning, and leatherworking were represented in the city as interlinked industries since at least the sixteenth century with shoemakers using locally produced hides, Rosen, 'Economic and Social Aspects', 186–7.

[25]Mathew Caute yeoman of St Lawrence Parish Winchester married an Elizabeth in 1703/4. A Mathew Cante baptised his son William Cante in St Maurice in 1705 (he may be named after a relation, as another William Cante appears on a conveyance and lease from 1704, relating to a tenement in St Peter Colebrook Parish in Winchester). A Mathew Caute had several children buried in St Maurice including Catrin (1720), Elizabeth (1711), and Richard (1704). It is not certain that this is the Mathew Caute Sarah writes about, but it is likely. Sarah's name resonates throughout the Winchester Caute family in the decades following her baptism; for example, in Winchester St Maurice William Caute, a tailor, buries his daughter Sarah in 1704. Two eighteenth-century Hampshire Bishopps appear in *The Complete Book of Emigrants in Bondage* as well as a tantalising Mary Bishop 'als Cane' (or Cante?) sentenced in London in 1719 (72).

[26]Rosen, 'Economic and Social Aspects', 291–2.

[27]He leaves to another daughter, Ann, 'thirty pounds & the Lease of the standing neare St Lawrence Church to be paid her'.

[28]MS Rawl D 843, 52 v. The short entry on Richard Caute in a Dr Caute's 10 volume twentieth-century collection of Caute family research notes lists him as 'Richard Caute 1648–1702 of Colebrook Street', *Caute Family Research Notes*, vol 10, Index, p. 110.

century dyers, tanners, and tailors lived in this street alongside widows, shoemakers, barbers, a grocer, glazier, cordwainer, maltster, carpenter, baker, soapmaker and tallow chandler, victualler, writing master, a couple of people calling themselves 'gent', one Humfrey Ellis Clerk (likely the author of *Pseudochristus*, the biased retelling of another non-elite woman's religious experience), and the brethren and sisters of the Magdalen Hospital almshouses.[29] The Cautes do not appear in any of the leases and conveyances associated with Colebrook Street, or in the late-seventeenth-century Winchester Tarrage Book. They may have stayed as guests of another person, or found lodging in the almshouses (though they do not appear in the sparse surviving records for these).[30] Caute's Winchester milieu would have been shaped by Tangier. Colebrook Street is next to Winchester Cathedral, and records of alms in the Cathedral treasurers' account books in the 1680s show that soldiers and mariners from Tangier mingled with disabled people, women, and people of many ethnicities including (probably white British) people who had been enslaved. [31] Increasingly, soldiers and mariners filter back to Hampshire from Tangier, mixing with people burnt from their homes in London, and disabled and Mad people.[32] Several people (notably formerly enslaved people, who were often also disabled) are mentioned more than once in treasurers' accounts over a period of months or years, suggesting that they were a recognisable presence around the cathedral, and were perhaps ransomed captives who became visible focal points of the cathedral's charity to people deemed particularly needy and deserving: curious cases alongside that of Mathew Caute.

Caute's most prominent Winchester encounters, from her own perspective, are with Ken and Charles II. The Bodleian account states that 'King Charles sent for her asking by what advise she choose him [Ken] rather than any other', documenting her reply: 'my Leidge had it not been done by him I should not have accepted it of any other'. This meeting is likely to have occurred in 1684, once Ken returned to Winchester from Tangier sometime after the April. It seems that the Cautes arrived in Winchester in the Christmas/New Year period of 1683–4, and Caute waited in Winchester for Ken until she encountered him in the late Spring or early Summer and Charles in the August or September of that year during his visits to the city.[33] Charles was in Winchester awaiting the construction of a new palace there, with which he aimed to emulate and rival Versailles and to move the centre of royal power in England from London to

[29]Ellis lived in Colebrook Street from 1652 and wrote *Pseudochristus*: a condemnation of the probably illiterate seller of pins and points Mary Gadbury who believed she was the Bride of Christ. On Mary Gadbury, non-elite women's writing and disability see Seymour, '"This Silly Deluded Woman". Ejected from Winchester, secretly returning, and then being banished to the Isle of Wight in 1664, Ellis died in 1672: he and Caute passed like ships in the night, see Rosen, 'Economic and Social Aspects', 276–7.

[30]For the history of the almshouses, see Steel, *Nine Centuries of Care*, 51–2, 61. 9; St John's Charity, *Memorandum and Account Book*; Deverell, *St John's Hospital*, 8.

[31]In 1683, the Cathedral gave alms to (to use the treasurer's language) a lame woman, a slave from Algiers, a woman with one arm, a slave from Turkey, a slave whose tongue was cut out, lone women, groups of several women, people defined by their nationalities and ethnicities – Irish, Huguenot, gypsies, French, Italian, people from Jamaica and the Netherlands – poor people from London, and 'a bedlam'. On the stories told by and about enslaved British people in and around British churches as a strategy both for collecting ransom money and instilling fear around captivity (often in accordance with captors' wishes that such fear be instilled), see Matar, 'England and Mediterranean Captivity', 5, 15–16, 25.

[32]In 1684 the list of alms given records 'a Lambish woman' immediately followed by 'a poor soldier from Tangiers' and a host of blind, poor, and deaf people, a madman, and a bedlam. Treasurers' Accounts.

[33]Weiser notes that once he had decided to build a new palace in Winchester in 1682, Charles spent 24 days in Winchester (August 29th to September 4th and September 4th–24th) in 1683 and 25 days in 1684 (August 28th–September 9th and September 13th–25th), *Charles II*, 183.

Winchester, thus bringing the British monarchy closer to France spatially as well as in architectural (and perhaps, ruling) style.[34] The project ended with Charles's death in early 1685, however, it is fascinating to consider, as Brian Weiser does, what would have happened had Winchester become Charles's central seat. Weiser depicts a late-seventeenth-century England with Winchester at its centre, strong connections with France, and the elites of London no longer enjoying easy access to Charles and representation in court. Instead, politics might increasingly revolve around a smaller provincial society with Charles more obviously prominent at its centre, and those like Caute who so happened to have Winchester connections enjoying better access to the King.[35] In dolefully summing up this as resulting in 'economic stagnation', creating a 'restrictive', 'small and dull' and society around Charles, Weiser indicates the potential for a Winchester that de-prioritised elites in favour of the non-elite provincial society surrounding the king: 'such a society would not reflect the elite of the nation, which would forgo the ardours of trying to speak to the king in favour of the attractions of London'.[36] Prior to Weiser's study, Rosen explored Winchester's status as a proverbially dull but significant Restoration 'provincial centre for polite society', home to ambitious royal building works that ended abruptly with Charles II's death, thus 'the city's chances of becoming a second Windsor evaporated as quickly as they had arisen'.[37] Caute's encounter with Charles may – on both parties' sides – have been part of this Winchester project which never came to fruition. Both Caute and Charles leave London for Winchester, envisioning the latter as central to their lives. Charles may additionally have been intrigued by Caute due to her connection with one of his most esteemed critics: Ken.

Was Caute a fraud? Caute asserts in her account that 'she was never in any sectirean Meeting House so she was never in any church before' she met Ken.[38] This meeting surely took place in 1684, however in 1682/3, she is recorded as being baptised as an adult in St Bride Fleet Street. The register reads, 'Sarah Bishop alias Caute, Daughter of Humphrey bishop, Adult by Mary his wife'. The vicar of St Bride's in this period was Henry Dove. Caute and Mathew's Winchester baptisms are not recorded in any Winchester register, perhaps because they never actually happened or because they were merely symbolic rebaptisms. There are other inconsistencies in Caute's account. Registering Sarah and Richard's marriage, the Winchester clerk notes that Richard is of the parish of St Maurice Winchester, but Sarah marries by licence, perhaps because she was under 21 in 1669 or was marrying outside her home parish. She states in her account that she was 'convinced' at 24 or 25 years old. The period of her convincement might range from 1681 (the year before her adult baptism) to 1684 (the year she met Ken), thus she was born between 1656 and 1660. At the oldest, this makes her 13 in 1669, very young to be married. Her birth records are not forthcoming, perhaps because she was born and lived abroad ('out of the communion of Christian society'). It is moreover unlikely that Caute encountered Ken in Winchester a fortnight before Easter. Ken was appointed chaplain to the British fleet in Tangier in August 1683, returning to

[34]Weiser, *Charles II*, 48–53; Rosen, 'Winchester in Transition', 180: 'Wren's design for the building clearly reflected the autocratic style of Versailles'.
[35]Weiser, *Charles II*, 50.
[36]Weiser, *Charles II*, 177.
[37]Rosen, 'Economic and Social Aspects', 303–4. On Winchester as a 'royal resort' see further Rosen, 'Winchester in Transition', 180–1.
[38]MS Rawl D 843, 53 r.

Winchester in 1684 (landing in Portsmouth in April of that year). Easter fell on April 2nd in 1684 but Ken probably arrived in Portsmouth with Lord Dartmouth on the following day. Charles, as we have seen, was not recorded as arriving at Winchester until August 29th 1684, but the Bodleian account provides two time-scales for this. Caute states that 'the king will be here in a quartar of a years time' then that she met the king 'near a fortnight after' the baptism: which was it? A fortnight after her (Easter day?) baptism or three months after? Perhaps the symbolism of meeting the King to discuss her spiritual rebirth on Easter day was too appealing to relinquish, even if Caute actually met Ken in May and Charles in late August.

Caute depicts a believer's baptism whereby her understanding of the sacrament and profession of faith were necessary to take communion: both her account and the parish records indicate that she was baptised as an adult. Ken 'with sacred consideration advised her to take farther advertisement and withall instructed her with great patience on his part to make her fitting to take that sacrament'.[39] Though such baptisms are often called Anabaptist or Baptist, Mathew Bingham reminds us that there was no such thing as a unified Baptist identity in the seventeenth century; rather, different congregations, and even different individuals, approached adult baptism in different ways.[40] Caute's lack of infant baptism could be explained because she followed a religion other than Anglicanism, or grew up abroad. If Caute's parents did not have her baptised at birth for theological reasons (for instance, because they were Royalists who did not recognise the authority of the Interregnum church) – reasons she later applied to Matthew in leaving him unbaptised for around 6 years – this does not mean she slotted in to an overarching (Ana)Baptist belief system. Rather, the atomised nature of baptistic congregations, and the emphasis on individuals' baptistic experiences, meant that her individual experience held more sway.

Attempting to pin down Caute's movements should lead us to question why we want to fix her story in a verifiable temporal sequence, especially when this is something her texts resist. Caute marks key milestones in Mathew's life whilst refusing to allow us envisage them in a clear, linear way. Mathew was well until 'a year old'. He had a particularly 'violent' fit on a Friday, then was baptised 'the Sunday following'. Caute's syntax takes us back and forth in time: Mathew's fit is back-dated from the time of his baptism, but his baptism is dated from the time of his fit: 'The Friday before he was baptiz'd (the Sunday following)'. Caute does not fix this Friday and Sunday in the calendar, telling us only about the personal significance of these days' relationship with each other. After this, as the effect of the baptism makes itself known, time becomes hazier, dissolving into 'a week and odd days'. Caute's story has its own momentum, meaning that the elite men who (as I explore below) deploy her account in new politico-religious contexts have to bend to the tropes and shapes of her writing or speech. The diaries of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, and the Gazette and Calendar of State Papers, Weiser's sources for documenting Charles II's movements, tell one story. Caute tells another that links encounter to encounter, fit to baptism, with timings that are sometimes sharp, sometime vague. We confront questions of authority: is Caute's account correct or the elite men's? With whom, as scholars, do we wish to ally ourselves? Following the rhythms of Caute's own text de-centres the authority of more traditional sources about the King and the

[39]MS Rawl D 843, 53 r.

[40]Bingham advocates 'questioning the historiographers' often unexamined assumption that the rejection of paedobaptism was immediately constitutive of a new ecclesiastical self-identity based on it', concluding, 'There is simply no positive case to be made for any meaningful dialogue, interaction, partnership or even debate among mid-seventeenth -century baptistic separatists of different soteriological persuasions', *Orthodox Radicals*, 146, 18.

clergy. Moreover, as I discuss below, Caute is not the only person manipulating time in her accounts: Anderdon does too. As I will now show, when the question of Caute's potential fraudulence is raised in a discussion involving high political actors, it is done so highly implicitly by placing her alongside intertexts that are interpretable as superstitious, devout, and mendacious. Our being pernickety about timings misses the point on which her account stands or falls in her context: her fraudulence or trustworthiness is not about timings but about the status of the miracle in seventeenth-century England.

Mrs Caute's influence in high politics

In 1685, Ken (now Bishop of Bath and Wells) used Caute's story as currency during a slightly awkward conversation with the newly-crowned James II. The diarist and courtier John Evelyn – who praises Ken's sermons in his diary – was present at this conversation, along with the diarist and politician involved in dismantling the British garrison at Tangier Samuel Pepys, and several other courtiers.[41] Evelyn recounts,

> September 16th, 1685
>
> we ariv'd early enough at *Winchester* to waite on the King, who was lodg'd at the Deanes, (Dr Megot) I found very few with him besides my Lord *Feversham*, *Arran*, *Newport*, & the *Bishop* of *Bath* and *Wells* to whom his Majestie was discoursing concerning Miracles, & what strange things the *Saludadors* would do in *Spaine*, as by creeping into heated ovens without hurt &c: & that they had a black Crosse in the roofe of their mouthes: but yet were commonly, notorious & prophane wretches: upon which his Majestie farther said, that he was so extremely difficult of Miracles, for feare of being impos'd on, that if he should change to see one himselfe, without some other wittnesse, he should apprehend it some delusion of his senses: Then they spake of the boy who was pretended to have had a wanting leg restor'd him, so confidently asserted by *Fr: de Santa Clara*, & others: To all which the Bishop added a greate Miracle happning in that Citty of Winchester to his certaine knowledge, of a poore miserably sick & decrepit Child, (as I remember long kept un-baptized) who immediately on his Baptisme, recover'd; as also of the sanatory effect of *K. Charles* his Majesties fathers blood in healing one that was blind: As to that of the *Saludador* (of which likewise I remember Sir *Arthur Hopton*, formerly Ambassador at Madrid had told me many like wonders) *Mr. Pepys* passing through *Spaine*, & being extremely Inquisitive of the truth of these pretended miracles of the *Saludadors*; found a very famous one of them at last, whom he offered a considerable reward to, if he would make a trial of the *Oven*, or any other thing of that kind, before him: The fellow ingenuously told him, that, finding he was a more than ordinary curious person, he would not deceive him, & so acknowledg'd that he could do none of these feates, really; but that what they pretended, was all a cheate, which he would easily discover, though the poore superstitious people were imposed upon: yet have these Impostors, an allowance of the Bishops, to practise their Juggleings: This Mr. *Pepys* affirm'd to me; but said he, I did not conceive it fit, to interrupt his Majestie, who told what they pretended to do, so solemnly.[42]

Ken having placed Mathew Caute as recipient of 'a greate Miracle', 'a poore miserably sick & decrepit Child … who immediately on his Baptisme, recover'd', the company

[41] See e.g. Evelyn, *Diary*, vol 4, 379–80, 504. Evelyn describes 'the wonderful eloquence of this admirable preacher' Ken, vol 4, 543. In his Tangier papers, Pepys is more critical of Ken's sermons, calling one 'very fine and season[able] but most unsuccessful', *Tangier Papers*, vol 73, 30. On Pepys and Tangier, see Lincoln, 'Pepys and Tangier'. For an overview of English colonialism in Tangier, see Bejjit, 'Introduction'.

[42] Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. 4, 468–70.

continues discussing supernatural matters: clairvoyance and relics with healing power. Evelyn presents Mathew as a weakened, declining child.

Evelyn enters into a scene of storytelling about disability's connections to both genuine miracles and charlatanry (the latter, Lindsey Row-Heyveld demonstrates, was central to early modern writing about disability).[43] Exchanging stories, the courtiers both suggest and blur fine distinctions between Roman Catholicism, magic, superstition, and Protestant miracles. As Shaw explains, when it came to miracles in a Protestant context, 'very great evidence was required because of a widespread distrust of Roman Catholic miracles – regarded as "superstitious" – and the apparatus surrounding them, and an equal distrust of those Protestant "enthusiasts" who discredited miracles by believing in them too readily'.[44] Swapping stories of miracles may have been a way for the courtiers to probe each others' Christian beliefs, unsure perhaps of what precisely this new Catholic king was willing to believe. We later learn that Pepys was listening politely whilst secretly doubting James's account of los saludadores. Presumably Pepys holds his tongue because, though James notes that the Saludadores are known as 'prophane wretches', the king seems to see something serious in the story, telling it 'so solemnly'. Contemporary Spanish sources were often scathing about the saludadores, confronting a similar situation to that of seventeenth-century England whereby superstition and piety threatened to dissolve into each other.[45] Ken introduces Mathew Caute directly after discussion of 'the boy who pretended to have had a wanting leg restor'd him', described by the Catholic writer on all manner of miracles Christopher Davenport ('Fr. de Santa Clara').[46] Was Ken using Caute to steer the conversation away from Catholicism and 'notorious and prophane wretches' and towards Church of England miracles, or placing Mathew on a par with the courtiers' previous examples? The conversation becomes increasingly emotive and personal for James: he activates links between the royal touch, baptism, and superstition when he reminds the group about his family's power to cure scrofula, and the courtiers adduce the case of the Deptford teenager Mary Bayly cured in this fashion from Charles I's blood collected at his beheading.[47]

It is unclear whether Evelyn's description of Mathew's cure as 'a greate Miracle' directly quotes Ken, summarises Ken's position, represents Evelyn's own judgement of

[43]Row-Heyveld, *Dissembling Disability*.

[44]Shaw, *Miracles*, 4.

[45]Campagne, 'El *otro-entre-nosotros*', 47. For Spanish discussions of los saludadores, ranging from mundane to diabolical explanations for them, see Feijóo, *Teatro Crítico Universal*, 11, 37; Sánchez Ciruelo, *Reprobación*, 3.7; For discussion of los Saludadores see Campagne, 'Charismatic Healers', Tausiet, 'Healing Virtue', Peris Barrio, 'Los Saludadores'.

[46]This boy, Michael's, leg was amputated and restored to him thanks to belief in the Virgin Mary and some unguent – such that 'all the populace saw the said Michael walking and praising God' ['omnis populus vidit dictum Michaelem ambulantem & laudentem Deum']—which was 'done miraculously, because it is not naturally possible' ['miraculose id factum est: quia naturaliter erat impossible'], Davenport, *Religio Philosophi Peripati Discutienda*, 152–161. Davenport examines the question of *how* the leg was restored in detail, asking, for example, whether God created a new leg for the purpose.

[47]Even in exile and even posthumously, James's ability to cure people with his touch or in response to their prayers remained key to Jacobite legend: see Bloch, *Les Rois Thaumaturges*, 392, 497. Interestingly, Bloch groups curative practices associated with the royal touch (healing coins, and cramp rings) in a paragraph with los Saludadores, attributing all this to how Europe was 'sincèrement crédule', but at the same time people worked 'à exploter la crédulite commune', ibid., 175. On baptism and the royal touch as both able to effect miraculous cures, see Browne, *Adenochoiradelogia*, with an example of a miraculous cure at ff7r-v. On links between the royal touch, Catholicism, and magic, and its political power, see Shaw, *Miracles*, 4; Brogan, *The Royal Touch*, 218–9. Shaw and Brogan both highlight that James promoted the royal touch and (though it had undergone reformation over the last century and a half of its history) associated it with Roman Catholicism by increasingly enlisting Roman Catholic clergy to assist him in the rite and invoking the Virgin Mary, at one time using the Roman Rite in Bath while Ken was bishop there, to Ken's shock, Shaw, *Miracles*, 71; Brogan, *The Royal Touch*, 153. For Bayly see Anon's *A Miracle of Miracles*, which deploys Bayly's case in the context of a pro-Charles argument.

the case, or is a blend of these. However, as was most usual for late-seventeenth-century people who facilitated miracles, Ken does not foreground himself as a miracle worker.[48] He refers to 'his certaine knowledge' of Mathew's case without emphasising that he (Ken) performed the baptism. For Ken, sickness is not an opportunity for a clergyman to show his power but a metaphor for our spiritual state, an opportunity to turn to God; spirituality and medical cures work together, with stories of cures prompting us to turn to God, and for the poor to thank their 'benefactors', as he explored 7 years later in his work on cures at Bath. [49] As the men map what counts as a legitimate miracle in this new Jacobean age, the political influence of Caute's account has manifold potentials: as stabilising influence, as an example of the importance of Protestant authority, and as an intervention on the tricky topic of miracles.

Ken and Charles had both met Caute in Winchester; all three use their encounters to shape their confessional identity. The fact that Pepys and Ken had recently returned from Tangier is significant in the context of the courtiers' discussion of Catholicism and superstition; Tangier had become a byword for Roman Catholicism by this time as well as debauchery and a failed imperial project.[50] Ken's conversation with James II soon after the Tangier garrison was dismantled was perhaps overlaid in his mind not just with his unpleasant trip to Tangier but also with his experience on the streets of Winchester as ordinary Tangier soldiers and poor, disabled, female and Mad inhabitants visited the cathedral. One pair clearly stuck out for him here: the Cautes.

It is striking that Caute's texts are shared among non-jurors (clergymen and other officials who refused to pledge allegiance to William and Mary), perhaps with the aim of affirming alliances between these men. Ken, Rawlinson, Francis Turner (1637–1700; like Ken one of the Seven Bishops who opposed James's Declaration of Indulgence and were put on trial for their opposition) whose papers feature heavily in the Bodleian account, and all the men named in the British Library manuscript as well as its transcriber Baker were non-jurors.[51] Thomas Thynne, Lord Weymouth and Marquess of Bath – mentioned in the British Library manuscript as Ken and Robert Jenkin's host as they passed Caute's story between them – collaborated with Ken on philanthropic activities, including setting up charity schools. After the so-called Glorious Revolution, Ken essentially retired to spend time writing at Thynne's Longleat property. Jenkin and Baker worked together, as Baker was a Fellow of St John's College Cambridge and Jenkin the College's Master. In the late seventeenth century, Jenkin was forced to eject Baker from the College for being

[48]On this norm and exceptions to it, see Shaw, *Miracles*, 46–9.

[49]Ken, *Prayers*, B12r-v, D2v, D6v.

[50]Gabriel Glickman explains that four of the governors, and half of the officers were thought to have been Catholic even from the earliest days of the garrison (which began in 1661), a 'confessional pluralism' that was, Glickman explores, part, in different ways, of the setup of several British colonies in the period, *Making the Imperial Nation*, 169–170, 182. See also idem 'Empire'.

[51]Twelve pages after Caute's account, a manuscript page refers to 'these foregoing papers', to which Rawlinson adds a note: 'I found this among the papers of Dr Turner Bishop of Ely Rc R', though there is no indication that Caute's text specifically was Turner's, and it is not transcribed in Turner's hand – for examples of which (and his penchant for glittery ink) see Tanner MSS 32 fol 138, 30 fol 60, 29 fol 128. The watermark on Caute's quire is a common Genoese design also produced and imitated in France – three circles surmounted by a Latin cross; the topmost circle contains a crescent moon, the second initials, and the third nothing – which does not appear elsewhere in Rawl D 843. The provenance is unsurprising – England did not yet have a thriving paper trade and imported most of its paper (as well as some paper-making moulds) from Italy and France – though sheds little light on who transcribed the Bodleian account, see *Filigranas Hispánicas* items 000088–000193 (and more); Churchill, *Watermarks*, nos 89, 403–6, 551, 559, 560; Laurentius and Laurentius, *Watermarks 1450–1850*, nos 58–63, and pp. 18–19, 32.

a non-juror. Baker's ejection was somewhat nominal as he continued to reside in the college, though his Fellowship had been removed. From around 1700, Jenkin resided alongside Ken as Weymouth's guest in Longleat; Baker's transcription of Caute's account in connection with Jenkin affirms their continued connection despite events at St John's.

Into the nineteenth century, Ken's work in Tangier remained a sensitive topic. In his transcription of Evelyn's diary entry, Anderdon separates Caute from Tangier. Anderdon adored Ken and may (though Anderdon's eldest son and brother-in-law were Catholic) have wanted to protect Ken's reputation from charges of superstition and Catholic leanings. Anderdon acknowledges that Ken was in Tangier in 1684 but implies that Ken and Caute met in 1672, a decade before their actual meeting, emphasising this temporal distance by the spatial distance of 100 pages between his discussions of Caute and of Tangier. Anderdon ties Caute's story instead to Ken's work with the Winchester poor in St John in the Soke, emphasising that Ken was unsuperstitious and in his right mind thus readers should not doubt the story of Mathew's cure.[52] When he introduces Mathew Caute straight after discussing Ken's work in St John in the Soke in 1672, Anderdon writes, 'In the course of these labours an incident occurred to raise his saintly character among the people of St John's'.[53] His fudged phrase 'in the course of these labours', while not a lie, does nothing to suggest that the Cautes were actually in Winchester in 1684, and implies that they arrived in 1672. By separating the Cautes' story from Tangier, Anderdon preserves it as a story purely to Ken's credit, untainted by associations with failed colonial endeavour and superstitious Catholicism.

Conclusion

Francesca Trivellato advocates for microhistory not in the sense of opposing global and local, but as 'the micro is not a synonym with the local as a spatial category; rather, microanalysis is a tool to test generalizations'.[54] Caute's texts are microhistorical in this way, testing generalisations about non-elite women's writing (that it is scarce, that it is of limited political interest), putting pressure on the academic fantasies Pender identifies about the unified and communicable early modern subject. Caute's (self-)presentation in these accounts occupy, but also exceed, various categories of 'woman': mother, Ken's grateful beneficiary, convert, 'custodian of family history', simple truth-teller. Occupying these legible subject-positions, and presenting Mathew's case in the familiar terms of a poor invalid overcoming his disability with God's help, may have enabled Caute to be heard: she was telling a story that others wanted to hear, with recognisable characters. Nevertheless, in their own time, Caute's texts were used to test general ideas about superstition, Catholicism, and miracles in a nuanced and implicit way. We might consider the possibility of reading them as a 'minor literature', according to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guttari's concept of minor literatures which emphasised the political nature of minority writing in dominant languages.[55]

[52]Anderdon, *Life of Thomas Ken*, vol 1, H2v.
[53]Anderdon, *Life of Thomas Ken*, vol 1, G6v.
[54]Trivellato, 'What Difference Makes a Difference?', 10.
[55]Deleuze and Guttari, *Kafka*, 29–50.

It is difficult to approach Caute's texts without considering the subject of disability, or acknowledging Mathew, Sarah, and Richard's experiences of pain and discomfort.[56] As David Turner argues, it is crucial to consider disability when we examine early modern poor and non-elite people; and vice-versa, examining class and gender is crucial for understanding early modern disability.[57] As indicated in the introduction, I end by exploring how we might theorise Caute's gender and social status, as part of a middling family with an artisan husband and father, through a lens of modern disability theory. Theories about disabled narrative provide a useful language for framing the non-elite early modern woman's voice which (from Anna Trapnel through Mary Gadbury to Sarah Caute) is often mediated: reported, transcribed, and edited by other people, usually men. Disability emerges here in a dual role: firstly as a name for a lack of control over one's own story and secondly as a tactic of ironising and playing with the notion of the helpless disabled subject whose narrative is claimed by others. This intersects with the ways in which being an early modern woman writer of Caute's social class often involved handing one's narrative over to more elite men to disseminate and interpret whilst at the same time consciously deploying the stock tropes of the woman writer: the humble petitioner, the simple mother, the amateur writer mortified at being forced into print.

Caute occupies a space between storyteller and topic of the story, between a sick and distressed speaker in her own right and the right-minded narrator of her disabled son's life. In so doing, she poses both disability and non-elite women's writing as questions of narrative control. Michael Bérubé and Remi Yergeau explain how disability and neuro-divergence are often defined as an inability to narrate one's own life well, if at all; disabled people thus are believed to need other people to narrate and understand their lives and selves for them.[58] Yergeau writes of the double-bind whereby if autistic rhetors are able to describe and assert ourselves as autistic, this demonstration of rhetorical proficiency is taken to indicate that we are not truly autistic: thus, the fiction that autistic people are a-rhetorical and can only be narrated by the able-minded is preserved.[59] Caute largely narrates Mathew's life for him, until Mathew signals that his disability has been cured by beginning to narrate for himself who he is, wresting narrative control from the 'little girle' who called him 'Tattee': 'my name … is Mathew, Dr Ken Baptized me'. Caute hereby conforms to stock narratives about the helpless disabled boy who never spoke before, miraculously cured by Christianity and emerging as a full human being only when he speaks like a Christian. However, in the Rawlinson version Caute undermines this neat narrative, informing us that prior to his cure Mathew had a social network (playmates, a family), a nickname ('Tattee'), and his own chair. Thereby, Caute enables readers to see Mathew as a complete subject before his cure too. Mathew may well have spoken before his baptism but perhaps the sounds he made were not counted as speech because the rhythm, topic, or speaking style did not fit normative standards of what speech should be; perhaps his lack of teeth meant that his speech sounded different to the norm; perhaps his

[56]On the importance of acknowledging the pain experienced by people in the past, and also the pain we might feel when learning about them, see Nielsen, 'The Perils and Promises of Disability Biography', 30–32.
[57]Turner, *Disability*, 2, 9.
[58]Bérubé, *The Secret Life of Stories*, 5.
[59]'Admitting that I am autistic, for instance, provides entry for others to tally my symptoms, to compare the context of my disclosure against their knowledge (or lack thereof) of autism's motions and means … .The ability to say, "I have autism," for example, is intuited as evidence that one does not have autism – or, at least, not real or severe autism', Yergeau, *Authoring Autism*, 139.

first language was not English. Either way, as long as he is marked as a disabled boy in this narrative of miraculous cure, it is not convenient for Mathew to speak; disabled speech is non-speech, non-rhetoric, non-subjectivity, and thus, as Susan Anderson writes, essentially registered as silence.[60]

Another theory from disability studies that is useful for framing Caute is David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder's idea that, throughout history, disability has been deployed as a 'narrative supplement'. By this, they mean that disability has regularly been used to represent ideas other than disability: disability is read as a symbol for a person's moral weakness for example or their low social status, or perhaps a marginal disabled character is introduced into a literary text largely to reveal something about the main character (for example, their kindness when they charitably help the disabled person).[61] This move dehumanises disabled people: disability can never just 'be', and disabled people can never just exist as full human beings in their own right, their disabilities are interpreted and reframed as symbolising something about themselves and others. The men who transcribe and disseminate Caute's texts involve her and Mathew in a process of supplementation because they use the mother and son's sickness and disability to symbolise and refer to other ideas beyond disability. In conversation with James II and among the non-jurors at Longleat, the men use Caute's description of disability to test, shape, and reveal their own confessional identity. What Ken, Evelyn, James, and the other men believe or say about Caute and Mathew's disability and sickness are indicators of what they think about Catholicism, Spain, monarchy, and the Church of England.

Caute's overtly dual role as explainer and explained, narrator and narrated, provides a framework for seeking a similar duality in work by and about other non-elite woman writers, including in printed texts. As Pender reminds us, early modern women writers cannot often be recuperated as a single self-authored voice in the way that many male authors can. We cannot see a subject who stands forth in the way we might hope: writing and signing their own texts. Acknowledging that what we mean by subjectivity in early modern women's writing is often mediated, and (like Caute's) visible mainly in the ways in which stock tropes of modesty and gratitude before elites are handled ironically or idiosyncratically, can intersect with disability. Privileging the verbal or the author-controlled text whenever we write articles on early modern texts would exclude many women and disabled people who did not communicate their subjectivity in a way independent of others. As Anna Stenning writes of autism, 'subjectivity is not the same as communicability'.[62] Embedding ironies, bland perfunctoriness, and inconsistencies in her account, Caute makes us struggle with, and thus reflect on, the types of dominant narratives about disability, subjectivity, and gender that we might be unthinkingly accepting.

We might trace a line from Caute's life through to the present day, with its social concerns about so-called "benefits cheats" on the one hand and inspirational disabled people on the other. Indeed, well into the nineteenth century, Cautes continued to petition for help in Hampshire. My mind is particularly drawn to the widowed Mrs Caroline Cawte, who worked for 'a Lady' before her marriage. A pencil note on her

[60]Anderson, 'Speech', 132.
[61]Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 8, 61.
[62]Stenning *Narrating the Many Autisms*, 24.

application in the Hampshire Record Office dates her application to the Hospital to 1834. At this time, Caroline was probably at least 60, the normal minimum age for inmates. The application presents Caroline as both very poor and highly respectable: her two referees emphasise that she has no means of supporting herself. With 'two daughters in service' she is 'a hard working woman who had an elderly husband ill for a long time and has struggled to keep the home going' writes one; 'she is thoroughly respectable and deserving', the other adds, and her husband was 'a respectable butcher'.[63] The space to mark whether Cawte's application was accepted or rejected is left blank, but clearly once again, a working class Caute women is having to package her story in a certain way in order to get what she wants. Respectable, family-oriented, and poor, these women jump through the hoops of legible subject-positions to receive charity, a trip, an audience with the King, a miracle.

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